

The Thacher Island News

Volume 3, Issue 1

May 2003

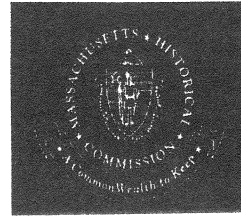
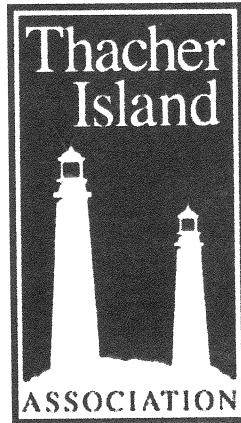
Annual Meeting Date Set

The Annual meeting of the Thacher Island Association will be held on Monday, June 23, 2002 at the Rockport Community House, 58 Broadway in Rockport at 7:30 PM.

All members are encouraged to attend. President Paul St. Germain will review the years events and discuss plans for this coming year. We will also introduce our new web site and talk about the events planned for this summer. Refreshments will be served. Last year over 85 members attended. We are hoping to see more of you this year. This is your Association and we need all the help and support we can get. As you know the Island is totally supported by your memberships, donations, gifts and grants. We do not rely on town funding to restore the Islands structures and facilities. Thacher Island's National Historic Landmark status make it even more critical that we continue our efforts to restore this valuable resource that graces Cape Ann's shoreline. Please make an effort to come and participate.



Harbormaster Rosemary Lesch corrals Doc Wedmore in a recent visit to the island. See story on page 5



MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

New Grants Received

We are pleased to announce that we have been awarded a matching grant for \$25,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund. This money will be used to begin the restoration of the Principal Keeper's house. We are extremely gratified that we were only one of 12 applicants to receive a grant award. A total of 53 applicants were considered. In the past a grant money pool of 2 to 3 million dollars had been available for this Preservation Projects Fund, but because of the severe budget crunch experienced by the state only \$500,000 was made available this year. The Thacher Island Association was very fortunate to receive this funding. We believe much of the reason we received it was because of our National Historic Landmark status and the fact that as an organization we have been very active and noticed by our state representatives and the public for the work we have accomplished in the past several years.

We also need to thank our members who have been generous in renewing their memberships as well as participating in our various fund raising events.

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Without them we could not have applied and had the matching funds available to us. Another grant for \$5000 was received from the Essex County Community Foundation in December of 2002. This is the second time this organization has awarded us a grant. This money will also be used for the Principal Keeper house project. With the help of Peter Bergholtz, one of our Directors, we have applied to over 40 different organizations seeking grants. We have had a number of "turndowns" due to the budget restraints experienced by these foundations and the fact that so many more non-profit groups like ours are seeking funds. We remain optimistic and hope to receive additional positive responses during the upcoming year.

If any members know of possible grant opportunities please call Pete Bergholtz at 978-546-9327 or Paul St.Germain at 978-546-7214.

New Keepers for the Island

This past year the Thacher Island Town Committee has been actively recruiting new volunteer keepers for this summer. We have had two of our keeper families retire, Merrell and Nancy Beebe and John and Vi Matherkowski. Both families have done a great job over the years. John and Vi served for five years starting in 1992. Nancy and Merrell for six years beginning in 1992 and continuing to 2002. We are pleased to announce two new families will be joining the ranks of keepers, Gregg and Martha Fox, who will serve for the month of July and John and Darlene Fulton serving in August.

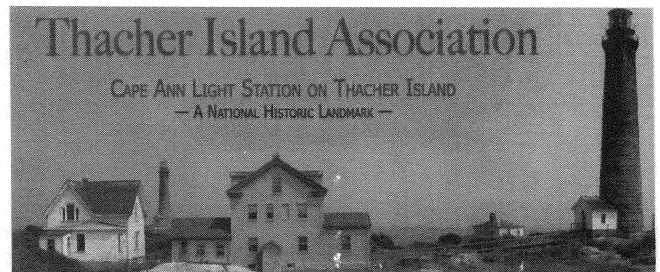
The Foxes are from Rockport and the Fultons are from Smyrna, Georgia. Dottie and George Carroll will be training them and have already given them an overview of the duties and responsibilities when each couple visited the island last summer.

Returning again this year will be Kathy and Andy Heinze for the month of September and Alan Tomaska and Ann Hernandez for October. We want to thank these folks for their volunteering to do this very important job.

New Association Web Site to Debut in May.

A brand new web site is being designed by one of our members, Les Bartlett who volunteered his time. Les is an accomplished photographer and is extremely conversant with web site design. He has designed sites for the Emerson Inn, Rockport Chamber of Commerce, as well as a number of inns and guest houses in the area. He also manages his own on line operation called "Follow the Gleam" on which he markets and sells his natural light photography of Cape Ann.

Our site will incorporate many changes. It will be easier to navigate and include updated news and information. We will have instructions on how to visit and stay on the island, a history with old photos, a gift store and links to other lighthouse and Cape Ann sites. The highlight of the site will be a "virtual tour" as well as an extensive photo gallery of the island. This tour will take you out on the Thacher Island launch leaving from Rockport Harbor, through the "gap" at Gap head and on to the boat ramp on the island. It will then take you on a walk along the trails, up the north tower and into the keeper's house. You can take see the site at www.thacherisland.org some time in May. Les Bartlett's site can be reached at www.rockport.ws or www.followthegleam.com. It should also be noted that the Town of Rockport also has a new web site at www.town.rockport.ma.us and the Thacher Island Town Committee has its own page.



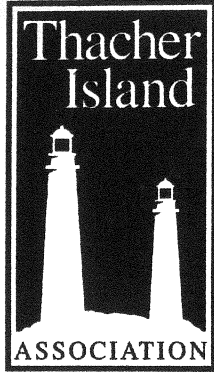
THACHER ISLAND | VISITING | STAYING | HISTORY | TOUR | PHOTO GALLERY | CONTACT US | HOME PAGE
THACHER ISLAND ASSOCIATION | ABOUT US | EVENTS & NEWS | JOIN | STORE | LIGHTHOUSE & CAPE ANN LINKS

Welcome to Our Island

Standing one hundred and sixty feet above the sea, the twin lighthouses of Thacher Island have stood guard over the coasts of Cape Ann, Massachusetts, since 1771. Anchored firmly on granite ledge, they overlook a fifty acre island, sea three-quarters of a mile off-shore from the Town of Rockport and its picturesque harbor. Providing support to these sentinels of the sea are a complex of keeper's quarters, trails, oil houses, granite storage buildings and slate roofed oil house and barn. A landing ramp and boathouse provide access to the island, and a network of railroad tracks and trestles, complete with a turntable was used to haul coal and oil to the old whistle house, where steam was used to generate the powerful fog signal.



Home page of new Thacher web site.



**Thacher Island Association
P.O.Box 73
Rockport MA. 01966
Annual Solicitation**

**For Membership Year 2003
(April 30, 2003-April 30, 2004)**

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Standard | Individual or family, minimum of | \$25.00 |
| Business or Corporate | Minimum of | \$50.00 |
| Life | Individual or family, minimum of | \$250.00 |

Please make checks payable to Thacher Island Association
a 501(c) (3) organization donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law

Name _____

Address _____

City or Town _____ **State** _____ **ZipCode** _____

Comments or Suggestions:

Time to renew your membership

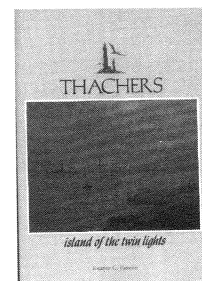
Its time to renew your membership. We have over 600 members today and want to keep each one of you on the list. Its more important than ever now that the island is reopened and ready to receive visitors. With your membership you receive a member card, a member window sticker for your car or boat as well as a ride to the island on Saturday mornings plus issues of our newsletter 3 times a year. We are beginning to do some major renovation work including the re-roofing of the Principal Keeper's dwelling at a cost of over \$350,000. Your assistance is needed to continue our efforts to save and restore this National Historic Landmark. Please use the enclosed form to renew today.



Thacher Island...An adventure with keeper Russell Grubb.
115 pgs. Soft cover, many b/w photos.

In December of 1980, Russell Grubb became the first volunteer civilian keeper at Cape Ann Light Station on Thacher Island. This is the story of the first 5 years that made him part of Thacher history.

Available for **\$8.00** including postage and handling.



Thachers... island of the twin lights
149 pages with many b/w photos.

Book by Eleanor Parsons. The definitive book on the history of Thacher Island. Signed by her as well!

\$22.00 incl. postage and handling



New hats for the summer. Shows off the Thacher Island Twin Lights logo in great summer colors Yellow, Periwinkle Blue, Lime and Tangerine. One size fits all adjustable, 100% cotton washable.

\$20.00 incl postage and handling.



Denim Keeper Shirt.

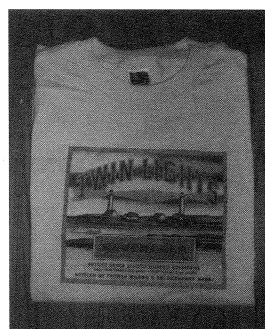
This 100% cotton soft denim shirt is a key item to own .It proudly shows off the new Thacher Island twin lights logo embriodered in dark blue. Comes in S,M,L,XL.

\$40.00 incl. postage and handling.



Thacher T-shirt ,
100% cotton in gray with dark blue TIA logo and the words "America's twin lights since 1771"
Sizes S,M,L,XL,XXL

\$20.00 incl. postage and handling



Twin Light Beverages T-shirt.

Full color reproduction of the original 1928 Twin Lights Beverages label. On a tan color shirt

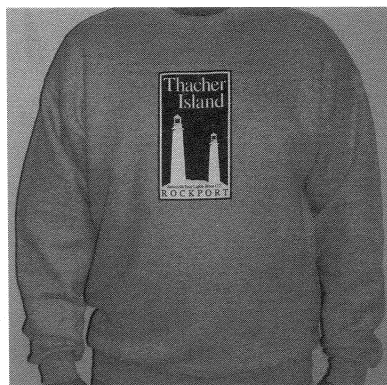
100%cotton
Sizes M, L, XL.

\$20.00 incl. postage and handling

Thacher Sweatshirt.

Heavy weight 100% cotton with same design as the T-shirt.
Sizes S,M L,XL

\$30.00 incl. postage and handling



**To order make checks payable and send to:
Thacher Island Association
Box 73, Rockport MA 01966**

Events for the 2003 summer season-Mark these Dates.

Monthly Meetings: Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in the Faculty Room at Rockport High School at 7:30 PM. All are welcome and encouraged to attend whether you are a member or not. Active discussion is encouraged.

June 4-

Jeremy D'Entremont lecture on the Lights of Cape Ann and fascinating stories about author Edward Rowe Snow and his relationship with these lights .To be held in cooperation with the Sandy Bay Historical Society at the Rockport Community House, 58 Broadway, Rockport at 7PM. Tickets are \$10 each. Call 978-546-7214 for details.

June 23-

Thacher Island Association Annual Meeting held at the Rockport Community House, 58 Broadway, Rockport at 7PM. All members are encouraged to attend.

July 18 -

Annual Lighthouse Cruise around Cape Ann. See the 6 lights of the Cape with narration by a lighthouse expert. Tickets are \$25.00 each. We leave aboard the Yankee Fleet's *Yankee Spirit* at 6:30 PM from their dock Rt. 133, 75 Essex Ave. in Gloucester. Call 978-546- 3253 for reservations.

August- 13th and 16th

Art & Photo Day on the island. This is the second annual Art day which attracted over 75 artists and photographers last year. Spend the day to paint and photo the numerous structures and natural beauty of this magical island. This event is for amateurs and experts alike. Labor Day weekend we will have an art show to sell and display these works. Donation of \$25.00 per person is suggested. Spend the entire day from 9AM until 4Pm.Call 978-546-8337 for information and reservations.

September 27-28-

Trails & Sails event sponsored by the Essex National Heritage Commission. TIA will participate and offer tours of the island. We will have six trips leaving on the hour from 9AM until 2PM. A maximum of 15 people can be accommodated on each trip. Advance reservations are not allowed all participation is on a first come first serve basis. There is no charge for this but we do suggest a donation or become a member. Tours will be given by TIA staff as well as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service representatives through their refuge area.

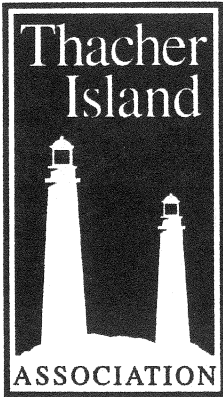


Doc Makes a House Call

In early April we received a call from one of our many "island watchers" to tell us that the light was out in the north tower. Dr. Syd Wedmore is the Chairman of the Thacher Island Town Committee and the man in charge of the weekly summer work crews that go out to the island. The crews work on a variety of projects to keep the island operating and in shape for our many visitors. Although we close the island from October to May we still need to check on it from time to time. With the Thacher Island launch up in dry dock for the winter we had to rely on the assistance of our harbormasters, Rosemary Leach and Scott Story. They volunteered to take us out on one of the few "calm" days we had. Syd rowed to shore in the skiff from the harbormasters boat and off we went to replace the light bulb in the north tower. We currently employ a small 40 watt fluorescent bulb which usually lasts 10,000 hours or more. This bulb is set in an amber colored lens and glows continuously day and night and very nicely recreates the original amber glow seen by hundreds of fishermen and mariners in the 18th and 19th centuries. Although the north tower light is not an official aid to navigation it is a courtesy light for the local boaters and represents an important fixture in the Town of Rockport. When our light is out everyone notices. So when someone asks "how many people does it take to change a light bulb on Thacher Island?" the answer is four, two to drive the boat, one to row the skiff and one to take the photo. Thanks to Syd, Rosemary and Scott for their help to keep the light burning.

Thacher Island Association
Box 73
Rockport, MA 01966

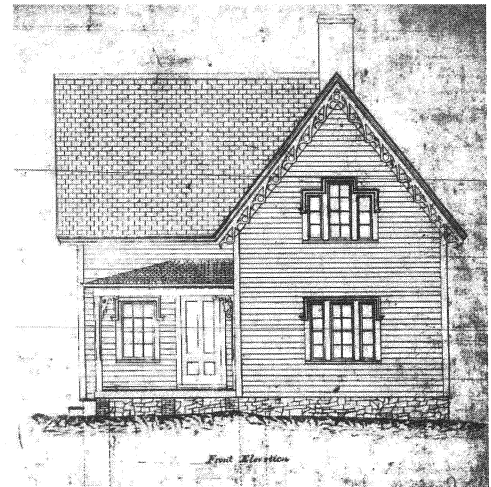
Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Rockport, MA.
Permit No. 19



Web: www.thacherisland.org
E-Mail: info@thacherisland.org



On the left is how the house looks today. On the right is the original plan drawing from 1875. Note the open porch and double light windows on the end gable which we plan to recreate.



Principal Keeper's House Next to be Restored.

Now that the assistant Keeper's house is completed we will be moving on to begin restoration of the wooden Principal Keeper's house adjacent to the big brick house. Its been estimated that this project will cost in the area of \$400,000. The existing house is not habitable now and is used as a storage area for various island needs. Plans are to replace and repair the roof, clapboards and external trim and refurbish the inside including all new utilities, heat, electric and plumbing. The ultimate goal is to incorporate a visitors center, interpretive exhibit, gift shop and accommodations for our volunteer summer keeper's. Currently the keepers reside in the brick duplex next door. By creating new quarters for them we can release their current apartment for use as an additional rental unit. This will provide an added income stream to the Town Committee to be used for further restoration and maintenance improvements.